

"More Husbands, Please" is the Complaint of England

IN many past ages it was customary to kill girl babies so that the nations practicing this unpleasant pastime might not become too populous. But in late times women have not been thought too great a burden for a nation to carry. In fact women have rather been welcomed by a male population that always needs wives.

But England now is suffering a situation that is parallel in some respects to that of the old time nations which cut down the supply of girls. There are two million women in England doomed to die old maids.

Thus there is a fraction of a man in the matrimonial market reserved for every eleventh English woman. There are two whole million surplus women. To every eleven women there are ten men, with a most annoying fraction left over.

It is therefore the bald and unblushing truth that two million women in highly civilized England are to be deprived of their very birthright—the right to marriage or to maternity. And this is not the whole truth, for many men in this country do not marry but prefer a bachelor existence. Other most desirable and attractive men leave England to occupy Government posts throughout the empire and numbers of the more adventurous drift to the colonies. It is next thing to impossible to state the full number of extras in women, but it is fortunate that no one particular young woman is predestined; each has a fighting chance if marriage be her object.

Not to be wanted by anybody on earth is a terrible fate for a pretty girl to contemplate. It has a shattering effect upon the spirit, and the fact that to-day thousands of non-marrying women solve their problem by a life of society, sport, study, business or some hobby does not account for vast numbers more of the unwanted without an object in life.

High handed schemes have been devised for placing these unfortunates in their proper niche, as if they were old Roman chattels: "Polygamy might be legalized for a time," but this was hooted down; "the right to maternity"—always hanging fire—was clutched at by the feminist press, and then one Charlotte Cowdroy, author of "Thwarted Women," evolved her own unique solution. She would provide the now notorious eleventh with a derelict whom the law should snatch away from a legal wife after seven childless years. We are left with a sorry picture of the wretched eleventh as "Patient Griselda" worn to a wraith by the waiting and submitting weakly to a hair pulling test at the hands of the recently deserted.

Regarded as Inferiors

In the Days of Old

Women were long regarded as inferiors in England, possibly a survival of the island history, notwithstanding Boadicea, who was nobody's inferior. An old established custom of educating sons to the exclusion of daughters made for the strength of the empire, which seemed made for men by men. The "plums" have gone to men for generations. The law of primogeniture, which preserves the estate for the eldest son at the expense of the daughters, is an example and the remaining divorce law is another. Women's long drawn out difficulty in obtaining the vote is an evidence. The spinster type is a result.

And the typical London spinster is not a negligible quantity nor quality; she is on the whole defiant and she tends to become a freak. They dominate the London bus. You sit and watch them one by one all clothed in mystery, with the firm belief that you will catch it if you aren't very



"They have the country."

"The reformer type."

"The bachelor girls who put up together."

Above—London abounds with the attendant of little dogs.

The black bottle type.

careful, but at the same time you ponder deeply on the unkind stars; as a type this woman has been relegated to a fate in which she has had no voice! It isn't even modern!

And this creature is neglected in more senses than one. In appearance she is in noticeable contrast to both the Americans and French. She looks ten years older than she need at 40, instead of ten younger as is the aim of all modern business women.

Throughout the country the neglected woman is even more neglected.

"I never meet a man of my own class," said one; "I haven't in years! I haven't talked to a gentleman since I left Calais!"

Is it any wonder they adored war work? And the young married woman wonders how her growing daughter will ever meet a man. This is a frequent topic of conversation in villages particularly. In the wide stretches of cool country they walk, they "tea" with all too many other women, they are allied to a family that is passing, their lives are empty beyond imagining. They have the country.

And in town, shut away from the roar of London in some quaint side street, members of a "society where none intrude," they grow ever more and more peculiar. They talk to themselves. They sport red

stockings. These are not mere accusations, because these pathetic soliloquies have been witnessed from the top of Kensington Gardens to the bottom of Hyde Park, where is its time honored custom to walk alone after a solitary tea, and there too the cardinal hose have been discovered in all their glory, although the meaning of them is not quite plain.

The Royal Borough of Kensington produces some strange characters. One dwells on her vanished beauty—her gold hair—her great blue eyes, and there is the proof; you get a ripple from that vast ocean of Saxon beauty which once rolled over England and has not left the land dry even now. These weird creatures hold on to other women with a slender hand; one has a title which she has "put aside"; another had a fortune taken from her by some "pretender"; that one was a writer and "had her public once"; and here is a playwright whose plays were taken from her boldly by a thieving actor; the West End is made up of thieves who have her plays;

she harbors the particular delusion that Mr. Henry Ainley is producing at the very moment her very play; curiosity led the writer to look him up and, sure enough, he was playing—he was playing "Julius Caesar."

Is it any wonder, with this sad fate staring the youth and beauty of England in the face, that the chase is as old a game as any other? There have been many beautiful Dianas on this fatal Isle—but some have bagged their game. There is a theory

that the English woman is given to proposing—well, let her!

This is, at any rate, more normal than the lonely traveler type who protests that any moon is as good as a honeymoon, and then attaches herself to every tourist from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand. She is the dread of the globe trotter, but pity must not enter in; she should be put back against her own Victorian background. London abounds with the attendant to little dogs who should be

put away along with these surplus animals. The bachelor girls who put up together will find solace—so long as they succeed in agreeing; when Margot, in sunset vision, sees herself a man she is merely reflecting the spirit of the age. Unashamed manliness abounds.

The reformer type is not an object of pity, although she may be a nuisance in her curious coat which might have been a carpet, and with toes turned out at an angle of forty-five degrees, so that no narrow gauge sidewalk could possibly have accommodated a life companion; her shoes are men's size, but they are balanced by a hat that is nothing if not a tea cozy. This woman has a mission and you are to assist her in its fulfilling. She is a reformer of men. Anybody who is at all familiar with London life is well aware that the club woman is of every circle, but the affable entertainer in the mixed club is frequently of uncertain age with a fast diminishing list of callers which she is out to replenish. She tends to be Bolshevik and to argue as a man.

Sweet and pleasant, so long as you leave her undisturbed, is the novel reader, whose name is legion. This generous minded maiden lady lives her life vicariously between the covers of any number of books. Hers is the complicated life of a purely fictitious character. And she believes in herself. But in real life she lives on her Chesterfield—that commodious settee which flourishes in flowery chintz in every English living room and was invented for the novel reader along with the open fire and the short legged chair, and the foot rest and the toast rack and the trivet, *ad infinitum*. The spinster of the circulating library is an expert on plots that thicken, whether in the hands of a Hardy or a Garvice.

Tippling Among Women

Now the General Rule

And some out of this combined peculiarity is the long result of tippling. There are few English women of the passe type who cannot produce a black bottle from some recess. Obviously the one answer to this from the defense is "perhaps you've not known the right sort!" but there are people who live in prohibition countries who would not dream of putting a concealer of bottles down as the wrong sort.

The higher you go in the social scale the more black bottles will you find; tippling is one of the things that is done and is, moreover, considered the prerogative of the lonesome. England is damp. And the open fire has always been uncertain. When, as a caller, you drop the knocker there is the inevitable scurry and scuffle within—the concealing of the bottle! And your fate in this little matter of cheer hangs on the impression you have made, or can. If you prove sympathetic you will hear the tinkle of old glass—the treasured possession of this left over woman. The novel reading spinster gets a "golden glow" from out the black bottle, but with it a ruby touch which attacks the nose and gives the game away; this evidence is irrefutable; you do not see red noses on young girls nor on comfortably married women, but you do constantly on the over-looked; a nose can shine out like a beacon and proclaim its owner.

What the unwanted woman lives on in England it would be difficult to guess. There still is in some cases the proverbial 300 to 400 pounds a year allowance through an older brother, but "in the old days" this went considerably further, and gifts from "relations" have long ago ceased to roll in. There is, however, not the same pride and independence in the matter of accepting money here, partly because money has not been venerated as in some countries.

But all argument aside, there is a "complex" and in addition the depressing statement that the death rate among men is higher than among women.

Missing Link with Devonian Age Found in British Guiana

SCARCELY possible is it for a scientific discovery to get wide notice unless it has a human angle. Man is profoundly interested in man, and greater to him would mean a way opening to knowledge of the First Man than the discovery beyond doubt of the earliest animals.

When the latest finding of the New York Zoological Society's little research party shall be given to the public it will hardly prove an exception. On the edge of the jungle in British Guiana, where there are numerous low forms of different groups of animal life that lead straight back to past geological ages, Director William Beebe in his latest expedition has found a fish that descends directly from the Devonian Age, the Age of Fishes, the period when the sea "transgressed the land."

In itself of immense biological interest, this discovery of a catfish—with type fully developed—armed with huge, hard scales, that is able to live on land and water and procure its food from both, a fish that dates back a million years and has not been seen on earth within that unthinkable period, really sends the ordinary man to wonder whether, as the embryonic wilderness—that is, those parts of the earth's darkness—continues to be explored, there will not emerge from it primitive man.

In addition to this salient creature the Zoological researches in South America, indeed in this small section of the Amazonian basin, have turned up seventy forms of "missing links" that tell the strange story of evolution in the insect, reptile and bird worlds. There in British Guiana may have been the dawning place of life of any kind. Certainly enough evidence has been found to prove that it was the nursery of all manner of things by means of evolution. And there are to-day found living creatures that have not been found—although that does not mean they never may be found there—in any other part of the tropics.

Dr. Beebe says of the weird fish: "This fish, still living in British Guiana, and nowhere else so far as known, is without doubt a 'left over' from the Devonian period. It is a regular catfish of great size and differs in type only by being incased in a true defensive armor of huge, hard scales."

"The catfish, which is very shy and whose habits are therefore difficult to study, is amphibious, getting its prey alike in the water and on land. Carrying a sponge of a substance like moss in its mouth it saturates this sponge with water and climbs out in the mud and debris of a river bank in search of food. So long as this sponge remains inflated the fish is able to live out of water."

Founding the research station in 1916, Dr. Beebe chose the eastern edge of the tropical rain-forest of South America,

which extends unbroken across the greater part of the continent. The locality at Kartabo, Bartica District, British Guiana, where the Mazaruni and Cuyuni rivers join, demonstrated in the first season its exceptional advantages as the site for a permanent station.

So fruitful have been the results of research in this neighborhood that there are even those scientists with imagination fired by frequent and rich discoveries that here and not in the East was the birthplace of the world! This being true, is it so wild a guess that footprints of antique man himself may still be found there, perhaps a lineal descendant of the first man who ever trod this planet!

Thus when the research party sent to South America by the New York Zoological Society to hunt for creatures in the eastern tropical forests of the Amazonian basin reports to the world a discovery of a missing link in the biology of reptile, insect, bird or mammal, the most ignorant of us stop to listen. For here is a concrete fact with a meaning that appeals to a wide curiosity.

Under the single direction of Dr. Beebe the study will take up that most singular survivor of the indefinite period when earth in the making was waterbound, the armored catfish. Seen by glimpses in a previous expedition, this creature is to be the star quest of the present one.

In a search for missing links in this tropical corner of the world were to be included, of course, any possible amphibians, but it was by chance this particular one

came into view. A boating party started from the camp at Kartabo. As the rowers passed out from the sandy beach and toward a rocky one, to the right of which rose a grove of mangroves, one pair of eyes saw a head and spearlike snout sticking out of the water. He motioned the oarsmen to peak their oars, and the boat lay quiet for a moment while he followed with his eyes what instinct had already warned him was another specimen of atavism.

This was a find, indeed, but what was his astonishment when, drifting slowly down stream, the wake followed by the boat drew in toward a muddy inlet and forth from the water emerged a giant fish!

On the edge of the stream the creature paused for a second, eyeing suspiciously the floating boat. Then as it reassured that no harm was intended it plunged awkwardly up the bank, dived under a fringe of grasses and was lost to sight. But not before the astonished watchers had seen that it was a fish of respectable length completely incased in a defensive armor of huge, hard scales.

It was a catfish, surely, but armed capable and walking on land!

The stay of the fish ashore was not protracted. While one man of the party landed and went cautiously around the mound in which he had disappeared to head him off the boat was kept close to shore. Three or four minutes passed and

then the sharp snout was seen again protruding from the grasses and the reptilian body swirled toward the water.

On the brink it seemed to gasp and a ripple ran down its horned back, then with a leap it landed in its native element and was seen no more.

To have seen the armored catfish once was sufficient to determine the members of the party to see him again, to trace him at least to his lair on land and to study him at close range.

Dr. Beebe found that this specimen was only one of many. And the difficulties of study grew out of his shyness.

In the opinion of scientists the reason for the presence of such a large number of prehistoric forms of organic life in this edge of the South American jungle is that while all the rest of the globe was overwhelmed by waters and getting cold, too cold for much of the life it found existent, this particular quarter preserved a temperate climate. The moderate warmth preserved the strange creatures until this day.

"Many low forms of invertebrates have rewarded our search," said Director Beebe, shortly before he sailed for Georgetown. "Others, like the armored catfish have come to our knowledge by chance. We had no idea of their existence until we saw them."

"The paripatus, a curious caterpillar or worm, will have a fair share of our study. It is a very low form of life and may be called either a pre-worm or a pre-insect."

It is far from being common, inhabiting rotten logs. If our whole party were turned over to find a paripatus and one were to be found in a day I should call it a good day's work."

The hoatzin, link between lizard and bird, is one of the astonishing discoveries made by the research party of 1917. No one can compute how old this queer species is nor hazard a guess of what time it took to develop embryo wings on which to grow feathers. Dr. Beebe said in speaking of the creature:

"So thoroughly does the hoatzin seem to embody past bird life on the earth that I believe if I can only watch it long enough, with sufficient keenness and controlled imagination, some significant hint of avian evolution is certain to be revealed."

"More than anything of which I know, this strange bird or lizard is to me an inspiration to keep hoping and working for more light on this fascinating phase of terrestrial evolution."

Evolutionary problems are indeed those which attract the director most strongly. Dr. Beebe said that the station this year would be open until May for the work of the research party, and when it returns home it is to be succeeded by a research party from Cambridge University, England.

"As we leave the work off they will take it up. And the purpose of all of us this year is to study creatures which have lasted over a million years."